

WE SHOULD NOT POLITICIZE FOREIGN POLICY

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise with a very heavy heart. And I speak from the heart. First, I think it is important for us to acknowledge that today in Baghdad another enormous tragedy occurred, the explosion that cost the life of almost 40 individuals, complete collapse of one of the hotels in the city of Baghdad, which shows us that the war is ongoing. And it reaffirms the fact that we are not yet safe.

I rise as well, Mr. Speaker, to say that we stand divided on policy but never divided from our troops. So I stand to salute those who have served and those who are serving now.

But I must stand today to also acknowledge why I voted no on the previous resolution, H. Res. 557. And I voted no, Mr. Speaker, because we should not politicize foreign policy or the lives of our young people. We should realize that the war on terrorism is both bipartisan and international. And when I met with a group of Iraqi citizens today who came and sat down and spoke with those of us who would listen, this is what they said. One, we will not be safe in Iraq until safety is number one; two, militia are roaming all over Iraq and kidnapping those of us who desire to be free; and three, rural Iraqis and Iraqis around the country, some 8 million, are not included in this constitution or the Iraqi Governing Council.

If my friends on the other side of the aisle would spend more time in honoring our troops and working in a bipartisan way, we would be safe and we could fight terrorism. And so I say today, shame on us when we politicize the foreign policy that needs a united front to save lives of our young men and women and the people in Iraq.

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S PRESCRIPTION DRUG BILL

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the President's Medicare prescription drug bill is so good, why does the Bush administration have to sell it so hard?

The Bush administration has already used 13 million tax dollars to spend on selling this prescription drug bill, this prescription drug law, to the American people, spending tax dollars for a benefit that does not even take effect for 2 more years. They have already spent \$13 million. They are planning to spend \$80 million more to advertise to the American people, slick television ads to sell this law that simply is not going to work very well. That \$80 million could fill 900,000 arthritis medicine pre-

scriptions. That \$80 million could buy 1.5 million prescriptions of glaucoma medicine. That \$80 million could buy 2.5 million prescriptions of blood pressure medicine. Instead, the Bush administration is going to spend that \$80 million on an ad blitz of slick campaign-style ads in homage to late night commercials.

TAX CUTS ARE WORKING IN TENNESSEE

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks and include extraneous material.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to talk about jobs and to talk about the success that we are seeing from the Bush tax cuts that this body passed last spring. The child tax credit, marriage penalty, expensing, depreciation, those are working for small businesses. They are working for entrepreneurs. They are working for the people that make this economy grow.

I want you to take a look at this article. I found it this weekend when I got home sitting on the top of my desk: "Boom times ahead. LLC Formations Soar." What it tells us is that in Tennessee where these tax cuts are working, the State registered 15,064 new corporations, LLCs, limited partnerships. That topped the previous high of 14,500 in 1997 and is up 22 percent.

Now, jobs growth is working for small business. This is working for women, because the fastest growing sector of small business growth is women, women-owned businesses.

Tax cuts are working in Tennessee. I commend this body and the President.

[From the Nashville Business Journal,
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BOOM TIMES AHEAD? LLC FORMATIONS SOAR (By Holly Dolloff)

The formation of limited liability companies in Tennessee has soared over the past two years, a trend that could mean the region's bleak jobs picture may soon brighten considerably.

The Tennessee Secretary of State Division of Business Services registered 7,412 LLCs last year—500 more than were formed in 1998, the previous high mark, and 49 percent more than in 2001.

The number of LLCs registered last year was more than double the number of 1995, when companies first gained that option from the state. Local attorneys attribute the recent boom to several factors, from increased comfort levels with the process to a sluggish economy.

"The LLC has come into its own," says Leigh Griffith, an attorney at Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis. "It's the entity of choice for closely held companies."

Total for-profit business formation also set a new high. The state registered 15,064 new corporations, LLC, limited partnerships or limited liability partnerships. That topped the previous high of 14,565 set in 1997 and was up 22 percent from 2001.

Griffith speculates the 2003 boom may have resulted from the down-turn that began in 2001.

"As the economy gets softer, people get laid off and start their own businesses," he says.

A very similar dynamic applies to higher education and particularly graduate and professional programs. When the economy goes south, enrollment very often will rise as out-of-work professionals seek new opportunities or new skills.

Though their greater numbers may often be attributable to past bad news, new LLCs could end up improving the local and state economic picture as they grow into bona fide businesses with multiple employees.

At this point, it is very unlikely that many of the new companies are being counted in the local or state economic statistics that show a stagnant job market despite optimism from both consumers and business owners.

The record number of LLC formations last year also marked only the second time—1998 was the first—that Tennesseans created more LLCs than for-profit corporations. The year saw 7,209 corporations formed, up less than 1 percent from 2002 and 5 percent below their 2000 level.

Fellow Waller attorney Michael Yopp, who recently published "Tennessee Limited Liability Companies: Forms and Practices" (DataTrace Publishing, 2004), says the 1996 renovations of state law facilitated understanding and increased employment of the structure.

"Fairly extensive" litigation involving LLCs in the late '90s has also contributed to the higher numbers, he says.

Yopp is part of a group of attorneys currently revising the LLC statutes.

Griffith was a prime author of the original statutes creating LLCs and remains a proponent of them. He says the most obvious benefit of an LLC is limited responsibility for liabilities incurred by others, particularly in small businesses.

"When you realize the fate of your company is in the hands of a 19-year-old delivery boy who may be hung over from the night before, and he hits someone with the delivery vehicle, your house is on the line," says Griffith.

Partners in LLCs could lose their businesses in a smaller situation, but their personal property is immune from seizure. And the LLC format offers breaks from the taxes and red tape that corporations incur.

"You don't have to have annual meetings and you're covered by operating agreements and not by-laws or restrictive stock," says Larry Papel, managing partner at Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz, who has registered several LLCs for clients.

One such client was a restaurant group with multiple locations. Papel says such businesses may be better off registering each entity separately, an assessment with which Griffith agrees.

"If each restaurant in a chain is an LLC, they won't all suffer if one has a problem," Griffith says.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCING AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, our transportation system has a direct and

significant impact on daily lives of all Americans. The United States has benefited greatly from having a strong transportation network. But, Mr. Speaker, we are approaching a crossroads.

In Texas our identified transportation needs outstrip available funding 3 to 1. Between 2000 and 2025, studies predict that the population of Texas will increase by 9 million people, and 90 percent, 8 million of those, will be living in metropolitan areas. The transportation system in Texas must be expanded to accommodate this projected population increase and related business growth. Important transportation projects all over the State of Texas are waiting in line for limited funding. Population growth, rise in construction costs, and increased transportation demands make this line a little bit longer every year.

We have three specific needs in Texas. The current pay-as-you-go funding system only covers about a third of our needs; the State's population growth is putting additional strain on aging roadways; and it just takes too long to get roads built.

As the only Texas Republican on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the reauthorization of Federal surface transportation programs is the top priority for my legislative agenda in the 108th Congress. Congress and the administration continue to discuss the appropriate level of funding in our transportation reauthorization bill, but we also need to ensure that current Federal transportation dollars are being spent wisely. Our charge as congressional Representatives is to protect dollars taken from the taxpayer by streamlining and improving the activities of our Federal Government.

As a member of the committee, I wanted to be certain that the U.S. Department of Transportation was ensuring the most efficient business practices within the agency. Last year I met with Inspector General Kenneth Mead to discuss the business practices of the agency and how the Congress can curb transportation spending. Inspector General Mead and I discussed the need for greater stewardship and oversight of the Department of Transportation's programs.

To date, the Department of Transportation has not changed the way the agency disburses transportation funding to State and local entities since President Eisenhower was in office. The inspector general recommended that if 1 percent of the \$500 billion spent over the last 10 years on transportation programs was saved, this would generate an additional \$5 billion. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this \$5 billion could equate to the amount of funding needed for 4 of the current 11 major transportation programs going on in the country today. I believe this practice could better assist the Department of Transportation in spending taxpayer dollars more efficiently.

There are examples of transportation projects that are done efficiently. Interstate 15 in Utah was finished ahead of schedule and under budget. In North Texas, the Dallas Area Rapid Transit system worked within their budget last year and actually returned over \$20 million in transit funding to the Federal Government. There are bad examples. Currently the poster child for bad examples is the Big Dig project in Boston, Massachusetts, and well over \$10 billion has been invested into that project.

Mr. Speaker, the General Accounting Office has estimated that for fiscal years 1998 to 2001, the highway account lost over \$6 billion because of the ethanol tax exemption and the General Fund transfer. Using the Treasury's projections of the gasohol tax receipts, based on current law, it is estimated that the highway fund will not collect \$13 billion because of the tax exemption from fiscal years 2002 to 2012 and almost \$7 billion from the general fund transfer between the same years.

Not paying interest on the Highway Trust Fund balance, the U.S. Department of Treasury estimates the Highway Trust Fund would have earned \$4 billion from September 1999 through February 2002. For those without a calculator handy, the total now is about \$30 billion.

Mr. Speaker, there are several policy initiatives that I have asked to be included in the highway reauthorization bill. These allow States more flexibility, especially in the realm of environmental streamlining, to get projects delivered on time. The RAPID Act, the Reforming, Accelerating, and Protecting Interstate Design Act of 2003, is one of these policy initiatives, and I urge the other Members to look at this legislation and to consider its inclusion in the overall transportation bill when it is voted out of committee and on the floor later this month.

The key to a 21st century transportation program is partnering private entities with the Federal Government and allowing large transportation systems to be built in a timely and sensible sequence. My bill allows large transportation systems to be built in less time and save money by constructing roads in commonsense increments as they are needed. Among other things, the bill would streamline and expedite project delivery by allowing an environmental assessment to be prepared simultaneously for several different elements of a project. It also expands States' authorities to collect tolls on interstate highways and expands the eligible uses of toll revenues collected on those facilities.

Mr. Speaker, in short, we all know we are approaching a crossroads in transportation in this country. My goal is to facilitate and allow States greater flexibility in handling these precious dollars that they will receive under this year's Federal transportation reauthorization. Mr. Speaker, it is my goal that families will be able to

spend as much time at the dinner table as they currently spend in traffic jams.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

VACATING OF 5-MINUTE SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the 5-minute special orders of the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) are vacated.

There was no objection.

IRAQ 1-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, this Friday marks the 1-year anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. Over 10,000 Iraqi soldiers are dead. Thousands of Iraqi civilians are dead. Nearly 600 Americans, 600 of our sons and daughters, are dead. Thousands more have been wounded. Physically and emotionally, their lives changed forever.

But the dead and the wounded are not the only casualties of President Bush's decision to invade Iraq. Something else has died in those desert sands. Something else has been lost. Truth, nothing but the truth, honesty.

For over a year, the American people have been deceived by the words of the President and his administration. Officials at every level have misled the people that they were elected to serve. They have also misled the community of nations.

We asked for truth, and President Bush told us that "Iraq sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." We asked for truth, and Vice President CHENEY repeatedly warned us of close ties between al Qaeda and Iraq. We asked for truth, and Secretary of State Colin Powell told the United Nations that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Where are those weapons, Mr. Speaker? We asked for truth, and President Bush warned us that Iraq had planes that could fly weapons of mass destruction to our shores. We asked for truth, and they told us that our troops would be greeted as liberators, that Iraqi oil would pay to rebuild Iraq.

The falsehoods go on and on. I do not know whether this administration cannot stop or will not stop. I only know that they do not stop.